

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS ZEV YAROSLAVSKY AND  
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The Department of Regional Planning is responsible for day-to-day land-use regulations and long-range planning for the County's 2,643 square miles of unincorporated territory and the one million people who live there. These unincorporated communities are geographically diverse and many are located far away from downtown Los Angeles. As a result, it is often difficult for people to attend Regional Planning Commission (Commission) hearings to voice their thoughts and concerns on land use decisions that will affect their neighborhood. Further, as a result of the limited number of opportunities for public input provided by the current process, the Commission often holds multiple meetings on one case in order to accommodate everyone who wants to testify. This can force community members to choose between enduring multiple trips downtown and many missed days of work or not being able to fully participate in the planning process. Further, this system creates enormous delays in the planning process for applicants and concerned citizens alike and increases the case burden on planning staff.

However, there is a better alternative that has been used in numerous other jurisdictions, including the City of Los Angeles. That is, public hearings on major land use decisions, including conditional use permits, tract maps, and zone changes, should

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first be held by an experienced and knowledgeable staff-level hearing examiner in the community where the proposed project is located. That hearing examiner should take testimony from all interested parties, make an appropriate recommendation as to findings, whether the project should be approved, approved with modifications, or denied, and submit those recommendations to the Regional Planning Commission for formal action and further opportunity for interested parties to testify. Such a process will increase opportunities for public participation earlier in the planning process, enable the Regional Planning Commission to make planning decisions in a more timely and efficient manner, and give project applicants clearer feedback as to how projects can be improved. In so doing, the Regional Planning Commission will also be able to devote more of its time to addressing regional policy issues and fully deliberating the cases that come before it.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Director of Regional Planning and the County Counsel to prepare an ordinance for placement on the Board's agenda for consideration in 60 days that establishes a hearing examiner procedure wherein a staff-level hearing examiner conducts the initial public hearing on major land use decisions in the community where a proposed project is located and then makes appropriate recommendations to the Regional Planning Commission for their formal action;

**WE, FURTHER, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Director of Regional Planning to prepare an implementation program that demonstrates how the initial hearing examiners will be designated, how cases will be selected until this process can be fully implemented, and contains mechanisms to ensure that this process will enhance, and not interrupt, the existing case management responsibilities of Planning Staff.